

17.—ALPHERAKY'S SWAN (*CYGNUS BEWICKII*
JANKOWSKII ALPH.) IN KUTCH

On 9 April 1947 M. K. S. Madansinhji, Yuvraj of Kutch, brought down by air from Bhūj a live specimen with a fractured leg caught on Hamirsar tank, within the limits of that city, on the previous day. The bird was one of a pair reported to have frequented this tank since 4 or 5 days before. It was said to have been attacked and disabled by a small crocodile, and was picked up fluttering on the shore. Its companion disappeared and was not seen thereafter. The bird lived in the Bombay Zoo (Victoria Gardens) till 14 April but succumbed to its injury. In the post-mortem by the vet the sexing was unfortunately overlooked, but the skin has been added to the collection of the Bombay Natural History Society. The following measurements were taken by me in the flesh: Wing 552, Bill (from forehead feathers) 99, Tarsus 112, middle toe with claw 140, Tail 161 mm. They suggest that it belongs to the East-Siberian race *jankowskii* (better known to Indian ornithologists as *Cygnus minor* Keyserling & Blas.) of which, as far as I know, there is only one other authenticated record from India: 2.1.1911 Tubi, Campbellpur, North-West Frontier Province, shot by a Mr. Hornsby. This skin is also in the Society's collection.

In all there are 3 records of the typical race, *Cygnus b. bewickii*—Bewick's Swan—from within Indian limits: (1) 2.12.1907 Jacobabad, Sind (*Jour., Bom. Nat. Hist. Soc.*, xxiii, p. 456), (2) 30.12.1910 Mardan, N-W.F.P. (*ibid*, xxi, p. 273) and (3) 17.12.1913 Khushdil Khan near Quetta (*ibid*, xxiii, p. 159). The Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) has occurred thrice, while of the Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) 14 examples were recorded in India up till the end of 1915, from Sind, Punjab, N.-W. Frontier Province and the Baluchi Frontier. (For particulars see 'A Review of the Indian Swans', E. C. Stuart Baker, *J.B.N.H.S.*, xxiii, p. 457) In addition to these I personally know of one more example shot in Sind (? Sakrand) by my brother Hamid A. Ali on 19 February 1913.

Curiously enough this now is the first swan to be reported from within our limits since 1915, i.e. in 32 years. The occurrence of a swan in India is in itself a noteworthy event; its coming as far south as Bhūj (lat. 23° 15 ft. N) is unique. A point of particular interest in connection with the present record is that in the year 1870 or thereabouts Stoliczka claimed (*J.A.S.B.*, xli, 1872) to have seen some swans while crossing the Rann from Kutch to Pachham. On this Hume later remarked (*Stray Feathers*, iv, 33, 1876): 'I take this opportunity of noticing that the Swans which Stoliczka (who was very short-sighted) thought he saw on the Rann between Cutch and Pachham were pretty certainly *Pelicanus crispus* (Dalmatian Pelican) which I have seen from this very locality, and which I saw on the Sind coast and on the western coast of Kattiawar'.